

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

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9:01 a.m.

FROM: Taipei

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 503, October 23, 7 p.m.

DEPTEL 356 and CIRTEL 714.

I handed President Chiang today copy of President Kennedy's statement and US draft SC resolution on Cuba. (Foreign Minister and DCM also present. James Shen interpreted.) Chiang had already seen Chinese translation of Kennedy speech and declared that he thought the action announced therein was entirely appropriate. He said President Kennedy was not in position to act sooner but further delay could have had serious consequences. He said he had already told Foreign Minister to instruct GRC representative at UN to support fully US position.

I expressed appreciation for Chinag's action and spent a few minutes calling to his attention salient points in message, such as use of term quarantine rather than blockage, deliberate Soviet deceit, US intention to search ships to determine if they carry offensive weapons, invocation of Rio treaty, decision to regard nuclear missile launched from Cuba against western hemisphere nation as attack by USSR against US, and order to US armed forces to prepare for any eventualities. I said my impression was that American people were in mood of cold anger and determination.

Chiang commented that he was sure American people would support President's action. US obviously could not tolerate what USSR was doing in area so close to US. In response to my question how he thought USSR would react, Chiang said he did not believe USSR would press issue to point of war. They would certainly take some action to demonstrate their strength

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-2- 503, October 23, 7 p.m. from Taipei

strength and support their prestige, but this was more likely to be superficial than substantive. Only firmness was effective in dealing with Soviet or other Communists.

Foreign Minister said he expected Soviets to veto US resolution in SC. Action would then presumably shift to General Assembly where he thought US would be able to obtain two-thirds vote. However, there were so many neutralist-minded countries in UN he was concerned that many would abstain and margin favoring US would consequently be small. This would be unfortunate as US needed overwhelming vote. He suggested as likely Soviet gambit, proposal that all nuclear missile bases set up by US or USSR outside own territory be dismantled under UN supervision. He thought such a proposal would have great appeal to neutralists.

Comment: President Kennedy's move was received with great satisfaction in Taipei. Not only President Chiang, but many senior Chinese officials have during course of day expressed to Embassy officers their pleasure at firm US stand.

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